

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPC-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10 RSC-01

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 EUR-25

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

LAB-06 SIL-01 AGR-20 L-03 H-03 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-15

PRS-01 DRC-01 /195 W

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R 051200Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 110

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: NO-CONFIDENCE DEBATE ON NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES

REF COLOMBO 2500; SSTATE 154410

1. OPPOSITION MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE IN BANDARANAIKE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF CHANGE IN FOOD PRICE AND RATIONING POLICIES WAS DEBATED OCT 4 AND DEFEATED 19-105. VOTING WAS ON STRICT PARTY LINES; WICKREMASINGHE COMMUNISTS VOTED WITH GOVERNMENT AGAINST MOTION.

2. MAIN POINTS OF OPPOSITION LEADER J.R. JAYAWARDENE WERE (A) FOOD CRISIS IN SRI LANKA WAS NOT DUE TO WORLD CONDITIONS AS SUPPLIES ARE AVAILABLE ABROAD; (B) REASONS GOVERNMENT CANNOT OBTAIN THEM ARE THAT IT HAS ALLIED ITSELF TOO CLOSELY WITH PRC AND THAT IT HAS NO MONEY; AND (C) IT HAS NO MONEY BECAUSE OF ITS SABOTAGING OF UNP GROW-MORE-FOOD CAMPAIGN THREE YEARS AGO. GOVERNMENT DEBATERS CLAIMED THAT NO FOOD SUPPLIES WERE AVAILABLE IN THE WORLD AND CALLED FOR MOBILIZATION OF DOMESTIC

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RESOURCES TO INCREASE DOMESTIC PRODUCTION.

3. MUCH OF DEBATE CENTERED ON WORLD AVAILABILITIES, J.R. ASKING WHY GOVERNMENT COULD NOT GET WHEAT FLOUR WHEN SOVIET UNION HAD JUST OFFERED LOAN OF 2 MILLION TONS WHEAT TO INDIA AND SECRETARY BUTZ HAD SAID UNITED STATES HAS RESERVES OF 400 MILLION BUSHELS. PRINCIPAL REBUTTAL CAME FROM FINANCE MINISTER N.M. PERERA, WHO READ OUT TEXT OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S AUGUST 3 REPLY TO PRIME MINISTER AS WELL AS TEXTS OF RECENT EXCHANGES OF CABLES WITH CEYLONese EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, INCLUDING AMBASSADOR KANAKARATNE'S REPORT OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH ACTING ASSISTANT AID ADMINISTRATOR WHITE, AS PROOF THAT NO SUPPLIES WERE AVAILABLE WORLDWIDE.

4. ALTHOUGH TENOR OF FINANCE MINISTER'S REMARKS ON PL-480 WERE NOT DIRECTLY CRITICAL OF USG, DEBATE DEFINITELY LEFT IMPRESSION THAT SRI LANKA IS BEING NEGLECTED BY UNITED STATES AND SOVIET UNION, WHILE OTHER COUNTRIES (AUSTRALIA, CANADA, FRG, EEC) ABLE TO PROVIDE GIFTS OF FLOUR IN SPITE OF WORLDWIDE SHORTAGE. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE INFORMATION ON TERMS OF SOVIET OFFER OF WHEAT TO INDIA. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE UP-TO-DATE GUIDANCE IN RESPONDING TO INQUIRIES ON REPORTED STATEMENTS BY USDA OFFICIALS THAT WHEAT SUPPLY SITUATION IS NOT SO CRITICAL AS CLAIMED WHEN, AT SAME TIME, WE ARE TELLING GSL THAT PL 480 PICTURE IS BLEAK. VAN HOLLEN

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